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Conclusion of the 20th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- Final confirmation of rejection of the proposal to list all *Anguilla* species in CITES Appendix II
- Government delegation from the MCEE, the MOF, the MOFA, and the KFS contributes to biodiversity conservation and enhanced transparency in international trade

The government delegation (comprising the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE); the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); and the Korea Forest Service (KFS), led by Chief Delegate Yoo Ho, President of the National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR)) announced that the plenary session of the 20th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES*) successfully concluded on December 5 (local time) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

It added that the proposal to list all species of the *genus Anguilla* (*Anguilla spp.*) in CITES Appendix II (Proposal No. 35), which Korea had actively addressed as a key agenda item, was ultimately not adopted, meaning the proposal was fully rejected.

The proposal, jointly submitted by the European Union (EU) and Panama, sought to strengthen international trade regulations for all species of the *genus Anguilla*. In the vote held on November 27, it was rejected by a wide margin,

with 35 countries in favor, 100 opposed, and 8 abstaining. The decision was upheld at the current conference, confirming the proposal's final rejection.

The government delegation continued to monitor the movements of the proposing countries and held working-level consultations with partner nations in preparation for the possibility that the EU and Panama might seek to reopen the proposal after the vote on November 27, and up until the final confirmation at the plenary session on December 5.

As artificial seed production for eels is difficult in Korea, the country relies on imports for about 80% of the glass eels needed for aquaculture. Accordingly, the Korean government expressed opposition to the proposed listing due to concerns that, if adopted, it would lead to a sharp increase in transaction costs for glass eels. The rejection of the proposal to list all species of the *genus Anguilla* in CITES Appendix II is the result of securing broad support through bilateral and multilateral consultations with more than 40 Parties.

Meanwhile, Brazil proposed a complete ban on international trade (Appendix I) of *Paubrasilia echinata*, a material used for high-end string instrument bows, but through consultations the decision was adjusted to ban international trade only for wild specimens. In addition, it was agreed that CITES regulations will not apply, as before, when instruments made from this wood are moved across borders for non-commercial purposes.

In addition, a ban on international trade (Appendix I listing) was adopted for endemic species with limited distribution in certain countries, such as the okapi and the Chilean wine palm. A ban on international trade (Appendix I listing) was also approved for all species of manta rays and whale sharks, along with strengthened regulations for certain cartilaginous fish species such as some tope sharks.

This Conference of the Parties served as an opportunity for relevant ministries, including the MCEE, the MOF, the MOFA, and the KFS, to work organically together and effectively convey the Korean government's scientific and responsible position to the international community. The government will continue to participate in international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of endangered species and plans to further strengthen inter-agency collaboration going forward.

The decisions adopted at the 20th CITES Conference of the Parties will soon be posted on the official conference website (cites.org), and unless otherwise specified, will take effect 90 days after the close of the meeting, on March 4, 2026. The MCEE plans to proceed without delay with domestic institutional adjustments, including the enactment of a notice concerning the national list of internationally endangered species.